In Roswell, it’s not Epstein, it’s UFO files

Years after ‘incident,’ mystery lingers despite Trump’s vow to reveal details

The Boston Globe · 28 lug 2025 · By James Pindell

ROSWELL, n.m. — President trump made public a trove of once-secret files related to the John f. Kennedy assassination in March and did the same for Martin luther King Jr. on July 21, as he said he would during the 2024 campaign.

His failure, however, to fulfill another campaign promise — the release of files related to the death of financier and convicted child molester Jeffrey Epstein — has rocked trump’s presidency for the past few weeks.

But here in Roswell, ground zero for the modern era of conspiracy theories, residents and tourists are focused on a different trump pledge that’s seemingly been forgotten: releasing more secret information about what the government knows about Ufos. that includes long-rumored files about the 1947 incident here, when a rancher discovered debris from a large saucer-like disc that the government later hauled away before pretending it never happened and changing the story again and again.

“Like, where is it?” asked Eduardo Alvarez, 36, who works at the house of Aliens gift shop in Roswell, about the promised UFO files. “They’ve been promising that for many, many times, right? Trump said he would be the guy to do it.”

Roswell, a city of 48,000 in southeast New mexico, has had an international mystique as a result of that incident 78 years ago this month. Initially, the military said it had recovered a “flying disc,” but quickly retracted the claim. The US government later said the debris was from a downed test balloon intended to detect Soviet atomic activity, but then revised the story again, claiming it was just a weather balloon.

The shifting explanations and secrecy ignited a lasting conspiracy theory: that the government has proof aliens have visited America but is hiding it.

most tourists interviewed recently while visiting the Roswell International UFO museum and Research Center, or the two-story-tall alien holding up a Dunkin’ sign, or the mcdonald’s shaped like a flying saucer said they were simply stopping by as part of a kitschy Americana road trip.

bob Veitch, 61, of huntingburg, Ind., said visiting Roswell was on his personal "bucket list," as his wife shook her head.

Put another way, though, a pilgrimage to Roswell is also helpful for understanding American politics in 2025.

"There's always been a direct, if dotted, line from conspiracies like Roswell to the modern-day beliefs of groups like Qanon," said garrett graff, a journalist and author of "UFO: The Inside Story of the US government's Search for Alien Life here – and Out There." "The challenge of much of the maga movement is that it has risen to prominence by embracing one conspiracy after another — and now that's coming home to roost for Trump with Jeffrey Epstein."

During his three campaigns for president, Trump has been asked repeatedly whether he would declassify information about what the government believes to be true about Ufos and extraterrestrial life.

In general, Trump has long said, "I have never been a believer" in extraterrestrial life and that the topic overall has "never been my thing. I have to be honest."

but during the 2020 reelection campaign, Trump appeared on his son Donald Trump Jr.'s podcast, where he was asked whether he had any more intelligence about Ufos and aliens, now that he had been president.

"I won't talk to you about what I know about it, but it's very interesting," the elder Trump responded. "but Roswell's a very interesting place with a lot of people that would like to know what's going on."

Trump went even further in the 2024 campaign, during a September appearance on Lex fridman's podcast, when fridman asked if he would push the Pentagon to release more UFO footage.

"Oh yeah, sure, I'll do that. I would do that. I'd love to do it," said Trump.

As part of his second-term promise of "radical transparency," Trump has aggressively signed executive orders to release records related to the Jfk, mlk, and Robert f. kennedy assassinations. he has also sought to make public more information about the investigation into his ties to Russia that dogged his first term.

but so far, there hasn't been any direct action from Trump on Ufos or, as they're now officially known, Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena (UAPS). The white house did not respond to a request for comment on why or whether anything might be released soon.

There are, however, reasons to believe something could happen. Congress has taken bipartisan interest in the issue and even passed a law in 2022 establishing a formal process to examine declassifying more material.

This came after the biden administration released a report examining 144 UFO sightings from 2004 to 2021.

Interestingly, Trump's current CIA Director John Ratcliffe said in the wake of that report in June 2021 that he worked to get more information out during Trump's first term because it is a matter of national security.

"There are technologies that we don't have and frankly that we are not capable of defending against, based on those things that we've seen, multiple sensors, in other words, where not just people visually see it, but where it's picked up on radar, where it's seen on satellites," said

Ratcliffe, speaking as Trump's former head of the Department of National Intelligence, on fox News at the time. "And so, you know, it's an issue of national security, and as the person who was informing policymakers about national security threats, it's not good to say, 'gosh, we don't have good answers.' And so, we have to have a larger discussion to try and figure out specifically what this is all about."

back in Roswell, kitty hjelmroth, 49, of farmington hills, mich., who was visiting with her family, said she just couldn't believe Trump would keep any promise, especially one this big. "I don't believe anything he says," said hjelmroth.

Down the street, Devon London, 35, from baton Rouge, La., offered the opposite view. "If Trump says he will do something, he will," he said, adding that he is personally dismayed by the Epstein story, which he sees as more important than anything related to Ufos.

Alvarez, the gift shop worker, pointed to the store's best-selling T-shirt (featuring a green alien with the words "illegal alien") and paused.

maybe, he said, he doesn't want Trump to shed more light on Roswell or Ufos after all. "At this point, the fun is the mystery."